



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

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PRESS RELEASE

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Gov. Jindal Says State Prepared for Tropical Storm Lee, Urges Residents in South Louisiana to Prepare for Flooding

BATON ROUGE – Governor Bobby Jindal held a press conference to update the public on the state's efforts to monitor and prepare for Tropical Storm Lee, following a Unified Command Group meeting with state officials at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness.

Governor Jindal said, "This storm system is currently parked in the Gulf, meaning we expect it to drop a significant amount of rain totaling 10 to 15 inches in some areas and up to 20 inches in isolated areas. The system is expected to affect South and Southeast Louisiana with the most rainfall, however many areas that are susceptible to backwater flooding are also expected to be impacted by the high rainfall.

"The National Weather Service told us that the center of this storm system is very broad, unlike the narrow center you see in a hurricane formation. This is what they call a 'hybrid' system with rain and some bands of tropical storm force winds with squalls spinning out of the center. Rainfall is expected in Louisiana through Tuesday night, including some tropical storm force winds and the potential for tornadoes. Tides could be 2 to 5 feet higher than normal.

"It is important for people to stay updated throughout the holiday weekend. Pay attention to the weather in your area and also the flash flood warnings from local officials. This storm is a good reminder to everyone that this time of year is still a very busy time for hurricanes and tropical storms. We are reminded that 47 percent of storms develop in the month of September during hurricane season.

"All our people should prepare now to ensure you have an evacuation plan in place, plenty of water, non-perishable food items, hygiene supplies, sufficient clothing, and any prescription medications you or your family may need in the event of a storm. This storm is not expected to become a hurricane at this point, but we are reminded yet again to always prepare for the worst and hope for the best."

Emergency Declarations

Governor Jindal said the state issued an emergency declaration for the storm system yesterday and 10 parishes have already issued their own declarations, including:

- Terrebonne
- Lafourche

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- Jefferson
- St Charles
- Vermilion
- St John
- Tangipahoa
- Assumption
- LaSalle
- St. Tammany

Governor Jindal said Lafourche Parish issued a voluntary evacuation for south of the floodgates to begin at 12 Noon today. The Larose Civic Center will be open as a shelter for those who evacuate there. Grand Isle also called for a voluntary evacuation for their residents beginning at 11AM today. In Jefferson Parish, 25,000 feet of tiger dams owned by the parish are being deployed to Lafitte in preparation for possible flooding there.

Governor Jindal also said that the Orleans Levee District has closed 13 gates thus far, including one railroad gate at France road at Industrial Canal. Lake Borgne Levee District plans on closing their one railroad gate. East Jefferson Levee District reports the Corps is closing gaps near an airport runway levee. Seven floodgate structures are closed in Terrebonne, and the Bayou Lafourche gate is closed in Lafourche. Plaquemines is monitoring low spots and evaluating the need to close a railroad gate there. St. Bernard is closing two sector gates and 12 access gates.

State Preparedness Efforts

- GOHSEP activated the Crisis Action Team to monitor the storm.
- DOTD reports no road closures due to storm activity. However, DOTD has halted construction on the La. 1 Expressway from the Gulf to Leeville and the Caminada Bay Bridge until further notice due to tropical force winds. DOTD has also instructed contractors to secure materials and equipment in construction sites that may be affected by inclement weather.
- DOTD urges citizens to get the latest updates on real-time traffic and road conditions by dialing 511 from their telephone and saying the route or region about which they are seeking information. Travelers can also access this information by visiting the 511 Traveler Information Web site at www.511la.org.
- DHH is monitoring water systems throughout South Louisiana. There is always the possibility that heavy rains or other major storm activity will cause sewage treatment systems to fail. Because of this, DHH urges residents to not let children play in floodwaters or ingest them in any way.
- DHH announced that it will close Oyster Harvest Areas 1 through 28. This precautionary closure is effective today, September 2, 2011 at official sunset. Tropical Storm Lee will have the potential to create flooding conditions that can cause natural contaminants to be washed into rivers, bayous and streams where they can then flow into the oyster-growing areas. DHH expects to reopen the oyster areas as soon as severe weather conditions have subsided and officials are able to verify the safety of the resource for human consumption.
- DHH is also working with hospitals and nursing homes to ensure they have fuel in their generators, if needed.
- DEQ has ground teams prepared to assess damaged areas to look for releases and survey sewage treatment plants for environmental contamination.
- DCFS communicated with the American Red Cross about the possible need for shelter space and they are prepared to assist parishes as needed. They have identified around 2,500 shelter spaces for those who self evacuate, if needed.

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- LDWF enforcement agents have relocated 25 offshore vessels that were being utilized on the coast inland in preparation for the storm. All LDWF enforcement agents are on stand-by. LDWF has 225 agents and 150 vessels ready for response. The LDWF mobile command unit and three fuel trailers are also on stand-by.

Marsh Fire Update

Governor Jindal said the National Guard stopped their water-dropping operations over the marsh fire due to the increased wind and inclement weather. They have dropped over 1.1 million gallons of water as part of those operations to date.

The Department of Environmental Quality is not issuing an air quality alert for New Orleans and Baton Rouge for particulate matter for today. The highest readings at monitors throughout the area show levels below alert level at either moderate or good. Forecasts show the Air Quality Index (AQI) will be below the orange level - which is unhealthy for sensitive people.